

RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 16 November 2022

Present:

Councillor Tony Owen (Chairman)
Councillor Shaun Slator (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Simon Fawthrop, Julie Ireland,
Tony McPartlan, Keith Onslow, Chris Price, Will Rowlands,
Alison Stammers and Pauline Tunncliffe

Ermond Berisha, Bromley Youth Council (Part 1 Only)

Also Present:

Councillor Yvonne Bear, Portfolio Holder for Renewal,
Recreation and Housing

28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Will Connolly and Councillor Christine Harris, and Councillor Julie Ireland and Councillor Simon Fawthrop attended as their respective substitutes.

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Simon Fawthrop declared an interest in relation to Item 7e: Provision of Library Services – Contract Performance Report as he funded a newspaper subscription for Petts Wood Library.

Councillor Alison Stammers declared an interest in relation to Item 7e: Provision of Library Services – Contract Performance Report as she was Chair of Woodlands Practice and Chislehurst Medical Practice Patient Participation Group.

30 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

Two questions for written reply were received at the meeting. A copy of those questions, together with the Portfolio Holder's responses can be viewed as Appendix A to these Minutes.

31 MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 OCTOBER 2022

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2022 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

32 MATTERS OUTSTANDING AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
Report CSD22122

The report set out progress against matters arising from previous meetings and the forward work programme of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That progress on matters arising from previous meetings and the 2022/23 work programme be noted.

33 HOLDING THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO ACCOUNT

A HOUSING, PLANNING AND REGENERATION PORTFOLIO PLAN UPDATE - 2022/23 Q2 UPDATE
Report HPR2022/062

The report presented the Housing, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Plan update for Quarter 2 of the 2022/23 financial year.

In light of recent national events, a Member requested the Portfolio Holder provide assurance that no Bromley residents, including those housed outside the Borough, were placed in properties with mould or damp issues that posed a risk to their occupants. In response, the Portfolio Holder gave a statement that can be viewed as Appendix B to these minutes and further emphasised the need to ensure a robust audit trail was kept regarding advice given to residents and action taken in such circumstances. A Member asked what action could be taken where issues were identified in housing association properties. The Portfolio Holder advised that whilst housing associations were not under the remit of the Local Authority, Ward Councillors could make direct representations to housing associations or the Local Authority's Housing Service, and particularly encouraged it where there were safeguarding issues. Additionally, Bromley Councillors had recently lobbied MPs to address engagement difficulties with housing associations and a Member suggested it would also be useful if a 'right to repair' could be introduced for housing association tenants at a national level. A Member requested further details of the Local Authority's plans for spending a Homelessness Prevention Grant and this would be circulated following the meeting.

In considering the RRH Portfolio Performance Report, the Chairman underlined that the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Portfolio continued to be developed and that consideration was also being given to how data could best be presented to support robust monitoring. In response to a query from a Member on Planning KPIs, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that Planning Officers held regular meetings to identify any learning from planning appeals that had been lost and this had led to an overall reduction in the number of appeals lost. The Chairman outlined how the Local Plan also assisted with planning matters by specifying development restrictions in different parts of the Borough and ensuring proposed development was

appropriate. Another Member requested details of any waiting lists for services be included alongside KPIs, such as in Planning Pre-Applications.

RESOLVED: That progress on the actions associated with the Housing, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Plan for Quarter 2 of the 2022/23 financial year be noted.

34 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO REPORTS

**A BUDGET MONITORING 2022/23
Report FSD22081**

The report provided the second revenue budget monitoring position for 2022/23 for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio based on expenditure and activity levels for Quarter 2 of the 2022/23 financial year.

In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Finance (Adults, Health and Housing) explained that £1,116k of growth had been included in the Housing Budget for 2022/23 to reflect the continuing pressures in relation to homelessness and the provision of temporary accommodation. A total of £1,785k savings was included to mitigate these pressures which had been drawn from the Housing Acquisition Scheme and the full-year effect of the Beehive Scheme. A Member raised concern at the projected income deficit of the Building Control Service for the 2022/23 financial year and the Portfolio Holder advised that extensive action had been taken to increase income, including a review of fees and charges with revised charges implemented on 1 October 2022.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note the projected net overspend of £762k on controllable expenditure based on information as at September 2022.

**B CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING Q2 2022/23
Report CSD22129**

The report presented the current position on capital expenditure and receipts for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio as at Quarter 2 of the 2022/23 financial year and highlighted proposed changes in respect of the Portfolio's capital programme. At its meeting on 30 November 2022, the Council's Executive would consider capital expenditure and receipts as at Quarter 2 and be requested to agree the revised capital programme for the four-year period 2022/23 to 2025/26.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note and acknowledge the changes to be put to the Executive on 30 November 2022.

**C BECKENHAM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)
RENEWAL 2023-2028
Report HRP2022/051**

This report sought the authority of the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing for a renewal ballot of the existing *Beckenham Together* Business Improvement District for a further five-year term, commencing 31 March 2023 and expiring 1 April 2028.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:

- **Note the results and officer recommendations from the survey of businesses in the Beckenham Business Improvement District;**
- **Agree authority be delegated to the Director of Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration that upon being notified that the BID proposer wishes to put in a request for renewal, to review the final version of the BID Proposal which is expected to be delivered to the Council on 9 January 2023; and being satisfied that the BID Proposal has been submitted in accordance with Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004 and does not conflict with any of the Council priorities and plans, and its geographic scope is within the boundaries of the London Borough of Bromley; to instruct the Ballot Holder to hold the BID ballot on 23 February 2023 in accordance with the regulations;**
- **Agree authority be delegated to the Director for Housing, Planning, Property and Regeneration that upon review of the final version of the BID Proposal, to vote on behalf of the Council for eligible Council-occupied hereditaments which fall within the proposed BID area; and,**
- **Note the potential for additional costs to the Council in the event of a no vote, with a further report setting out options to be submitted for Members' consideration in that event.**

**D FUTURE OF COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRES/
OUTREACH SERVICE
Report HPR2022/055**

This report set out a number of issues impacting the Cotmandene Community Resource Centre and Mottingham Community and Learning Shop and requesting that this valuable community resource be retained, and that work be undertaken to explore the relocation of both services within the St Paul's Cray and Mottingham communities.

In considering the report, the Assistant Director: Culture and Regeneration advised that the two buildings these services were located in were no longer fit for purpose due to ongoing maintenance issues, including flooding, and as

the current lease for the Mottingham site was set to expire in February 2023. A Member underlined the importance of the Community Resource Centres which offered a unique triage service where customers could seek advice and guidance on any issue, reducing escalation to other Local Authority services. Another Member agreed this was a highly valued and well-used community-based service and suggested that the Local Authority assess the social value derived from its investment in the centres as part of the planned review.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to:

- **Retain this valuable community service; and,**
- **Agree the following work be undertaken by Officers after which a decision report be presented to the Council's Executive in Spring 2023:**
 - **Research on potential options for the relocation of the service within the St Paul's Cray and Mottingham areas;**
 - **Research on the user patterns in the two communities;**
 - **Soundings from users and non-users; and,**
 - **Investigation of the costs of moving to other buildings.**

**E PROVISION OF LIBRARY SERVICES - CONTRACT
PERFORMANCE REPORT
Report HPR2022/021**

The report provided an update to Members on the performance of Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) in delivering the Library Service contract which commenced on 1 November 2017 with a ten-year contract term and the option of a further five years by mutual consent.

In response to a question raised by a Member in advance of the meeting, the Chairman gave a statement with regard to uses of the libraries as warm hubs:

"There is no planned policy change or development of any new service for warm places in libraries, hence why no formal report has been planned for the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee as there would not be any role for it in scrutinising policy/service changes. Having said that, on 11 November 2022 it was announced that tea and coffee would be served in Bromley libraries which provide public warm spaces across the Borough (https://www.bromley.gov.uk/news/article/408/tea-and-coffee-to-be-served-in-libraries?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter). In addition, should any voluntary agencies wish to offer further warm places in Bromley communities, they are encouraged to approach the Council's Media Team who will assist in raising awareness and publicising opportunities."

In addition to this statement, the Portfolio Holder advised that a full schedule would be published shortly outlining the time periods that tea and coffee would

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be available in each library and a Member requested that further details around the development of this community initiative be provided following the meeting. Members discussed the related issue of public toilet provision which was only available at some of the Borough's libraries and was not always accessible with details of available facilities to be provided to Members following the meeting. Unfortunately, it was not possible to offer library users access to toilet provision at Central Library due to issues with the building's infrastructure, although access to toilets could be granted to smaller on-site groups including the blood transfusion service.

In considering the report, a Member was pleased to note that overall monthly issues of all types indicated the recovery of the Library Service beyond 2019 levels, with smaller branches such as St Paul's Cray amongst those who had seen the biggest increases in use. The Cotmandene Community Resource Centre had temporarily moved to St Paul's Cray Library due to building issues and the Assistant Director: Culture and Regeneration observed that staff had worked hard to make the co-location a positive experience. Another Member was concerned that overall library visits had recovered to only just under 73% of pre-COVID levels but the Head of Bromley Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLL) advised that this was higher than the national average and that 15% of items issued were now electronic (such as e-books). A Member suggested a virtual membership system be introduced to phase out library cards and the Head of Bromley Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLL) confirmed that a pilot virtual membership system was being trialled in another library service run by GLL; however, it would be important to ensure users were not excluded should a virtual membership scheme be adopted in due course.

In response to other questions by Members, the Head of Bromley Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLL) reported there were currently 75 casual workers working in Bromley Libraries which was a similar number to the previous year. The three business centres established at Bromley Central, Orpington and Biggin Hill libraries to support the Start Up Bromley programme continued to be well-used. The work and meeting space set aside for this programme was separate to the study space available to other library users and both groups brought their own unique energies to the libraries. A Member highlighted issues with the quality of food waste bags on sale in the libraries and GLL would take this forward with the Local Authority which was its partners in purchasing food waste bags.

The Chairman led the Committee in thanking the library staff for their excellent work in delivering such a highly valued service to Bromley residents, workers and learners.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note the performance of the service provider since the last report on service performance was presented in June 2022.

35 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

A LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION PARKS RENOVATION FUND Report HPR2022/054

The report provided details of a successful grant application made to the Lawn Tennis Association for £230,580 to fund the renovation of ten tennis courts across the Borough and requested the Council's Executive approve the acceptance of the grant, proceed with the renovation works and commence the tender process to procure an operator.

In considering the report, a Member observed that in accepting the grant and refurbishing the courts (including the removal of rigid nets), all the sites would move from a free-to-access to a paid model to cover the costs of the operator managing and maintaining the courts. The Assistant Director, Culture and Regeneration explained this paid model was similar to that used at Park Langley which offered a household membership of £24 per annum and the Local Authority could specify as part of the operating tender that a certain number of free booking slots must be offered with at least 30% of the renovated sites also anticipated to offer free 'Parkrun for tennis' opportunities. The Chairman noted the increasing popularity of Padel tennis for which two courts were available at The Sundridge Park Club and the Lawn Tennis Association Representative advised that this was a rapidly growing sport which was accessible to beginners and provided a gateway into tennis.

RESOLVED: That the Council's Executive be recommended to:

- 1) Approve the acceptance of the Lawn Tennis Association Grant, subject to standard Terms and Conditions;**
- 2) Agree to the scheme being added to the capital programme; and,**
- 3) Agree that Officers commence the tender process to procure an operator.**

B UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND - BOROUGH ALLOCATION Report HPR2022/057A

The report sought the authority of the Council's Executive to accept the UK Shared Prosperity Fund borough allocation grant totalling £1.63M and requested delegated authority be granted to the Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation to determine interventions agreed with the Greater London Authority via a grant agreement and any variations to the grant.

In considering the grant allocation, a Member highlighted the importance of support for high streets and local parades being targeted at independent retailers. Another Member observed that £1.23M would be used towards the

development of the new West Wickham library building and it was confirmed that this would fund additions to the current scheme. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund was a three-year scheme, and it was possible a further round of funding would be made available at the end of the three years at which time other schemes might benefit. The Head of Economic Development advised Members that a further tranche of funding was also due to be made available in the areas of People and Skills via Local London which the Local Authority hoped to benefit from, and that the process for the remaining competitive funds for London had yet to be determined by the Greater London Authority.

RESOLVED: That the Council's Executive be recommended to:

- 1) Approve the acceptance of the in-principle allocation of UKSPF grant funding totalling £1.63M, and approve for the capital programme and revenue budgets to be adjusted accordingly;**
- 2) Approve delegated authority to the Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation to determine interventions agreed with Greater London Authority through a grant agreement and any variations to the grant;**
- 3) Note the proposed interventions submitted to the Greater London Authority set out in paragraphs 3.6-3.29; and,**
- 4) Note the scope of this decision does not include the in-principle allocation of £760K for 2024-2025 for People and Skills which is only accessible through Local London and determined through sub-regional decision-making.**

36 POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER ITEMS

A UPDATE ON HOUSING DELIVERY PART 1 (PUBLIC) REPORT Report HPR2022/060A

The report provided an update on Council-owned sites that have been considered for social housing development, including the Bromley North and Beckenham Triangle sites that were expected to progress to the planning process shortly.

A Member requested high-level sketches for the proposed schemes at Bromley North and Beckenham Triangle be circulated to Members following the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the update on housing delivery be noted.

37 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

RESOLVED that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business referred to below as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the Press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

**The following summaries
refer to matters involving exempt information**

38 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 4 OCTOBER 2022

The Part 2 (Exempt) minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2022 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

39 PART 2 (EXEMPT) POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER ITEMS

A UPDATE ON HOUSING DELIVERY PART 2 (EXEMPT) REPORT

The Committee considered a report setting out Part 2 (Exempt) aspects of the update on housing delivery.

The Meeting ended at 8.38 pm

Chairman

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**RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE
16 NOVEMBER 2022**

NON-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

(A) QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY

From Dermot Mckibbin to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

1. What are the implications for the Portfolio Plan of the Levelling Up Bill's proposals for the private rented sector and does the Council support these proposals?

Reply:

The findings of the current Inquiry will be considered once concluded and published to assess whether there are potential implications arising which may directly impact upon the work areas contained in the Portfolio Plan

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

(B) QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY

From Councillor Alisa Igoe to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

In relation to Item 6a: Housing, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Plan Update – 2022/23 Q2 Update:

1. Reference: Page 27, Portfolio Plan – Allocations scheme – “Reviewing the existing allocations scheme and consulting on changes that need to be introduced.”

On 24 October a report appeared in the national press that Bromley families were being offered housing in Northampton and Birmingham families were being placed in Bromley. Could the Portfolio Holder please tell me the longest distance in miles away from the borough that any Bromley family has been placed in 2020/21, the reasons for this, did the family have children of school age and why another local authority has been able to place a family in Bromley, presumably in accommodation that we may have been able to bid for? Thank you.

Reply:

Work is underway to compile a comprehensive answer and this will be circulated to the Committee and published on the Bromley website shortly.

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APPENDIX B

RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE 16 November 2022

STATEMENT BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING

Unfortunately mould is one of the most common issues that we tackle in terms of disrepair. In some cases this is exacerbated because of the way the tenants are using the properties. In these instances we provide advice on how to manage this and work directly with the tenant to resolve the issue.

There are of course instances where there is a problem within the property that requires action by the Provider / Owner. In such instances we have to make a judgement call based on the timescales and circumstances of the household. Where we felt that a problem couldn't be satisfactorily resolved within a reasonable period of time and/or there were medical grounds that concerned us we would take steps to move the household. We would actively work with the provider to get this resolved and utilise expertise from colleagues in environmental services where needed.

When we procure accommodation all homes must meet minimum EPC standards and when purchasing homes, for example via the Meadowship or Beehive Schemes we have actively rejected homes where there is evidence of damp or mould or a high probability that this could occur in the future.

In short we cannot guarantee that we will never experience problems with mould in our properties or indeed other faults and disrepair that could be potentially dangerous. However we take all possible steps to minimise this happening and have processes in place which quickly allow us to respond once we are made aware of a situation.

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